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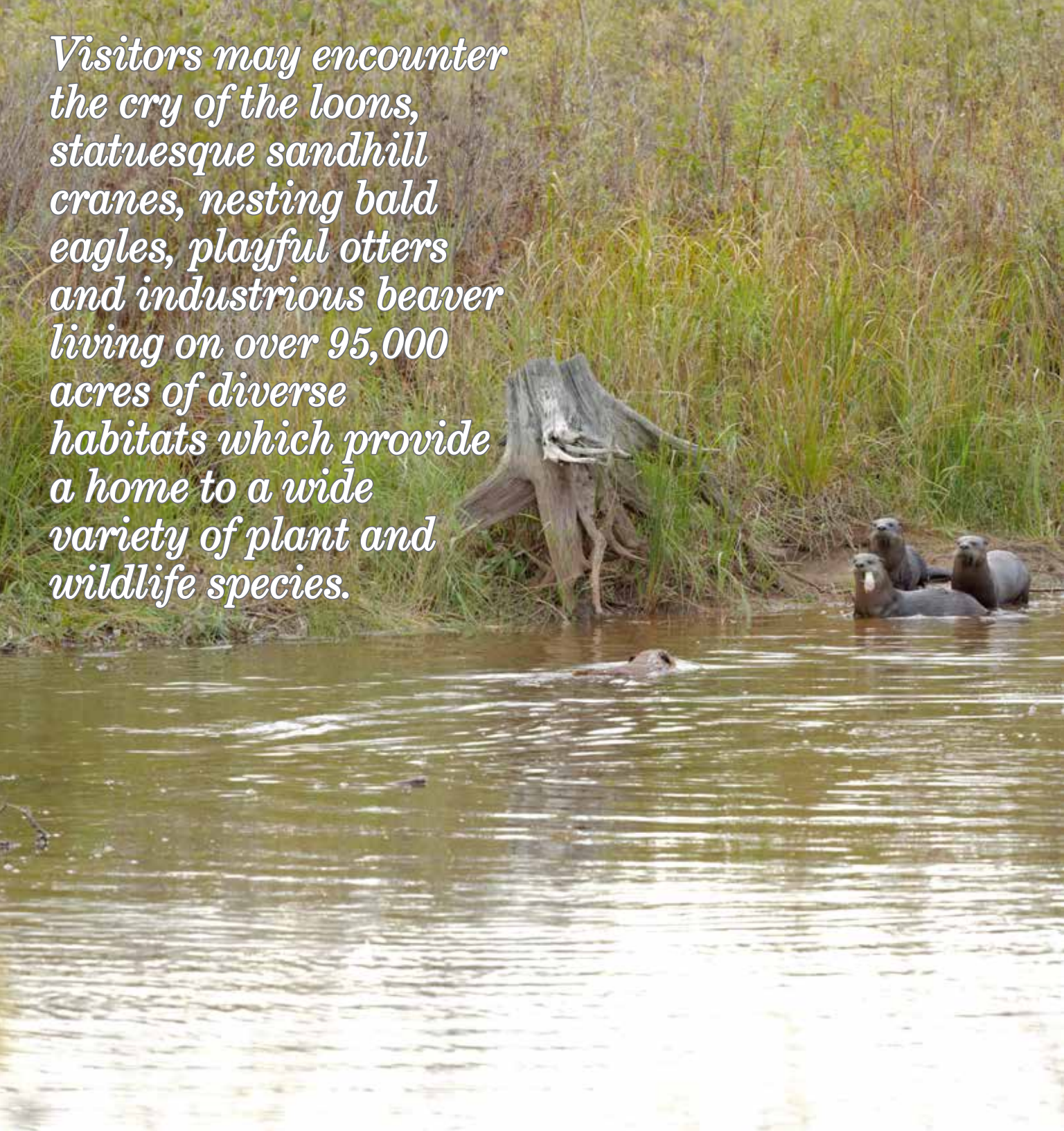
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Seney

National Wildlife Refuge



Visitors may encounter the cry of the loons, statuesque sandhill cranes, nesting bald eagles, playful otters and industrious beaver living on over 95,000 acres of diverse habitats which provide a home to a wide variety of plant and wildlife species.





History of Seney

Seney National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1935 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt for the protection and production of migratory birds and other wildlife.

Over a century ago, timber operations forever altered the landscape of the Upper Peninsula's great pine forests. The ring of the lumberjack's axe echoed through the forests as local mills altered the region's red and eastern white pine forests. After the pine forests were cut, mill owners turned their axes and saws to the northern hardwood and lowland coniferous forests.

Following the logging, fires were often set to clear away the debris. These fires burned into the soil, damaging its quality and killing the seeds that would have produced a new forest.

After the fires, a land development company dug many miles of drainage ditches. The drained acreage was sold using extravagant promises of agricultural productivity, but the new owners quickly learned that these promises were unfounded. One by one, the farms were abandoned, and the land reverted to state ownership.



Cutting down aspen trees so Canada geese could graze - 1938.



Logging with a cross-cut saw.



Planting aquatic plants in the newly created pools.

In 1934, the Michigan Conservation Department recommended to the Federal Government that the Seney area be developed for wildlife. This proposal was accepted and the National Wildlife Refuge was established.

The new refuge was intended to be a haven for migrating waterfowl. To create a home for these birds, wildlife managers, with the aid of the Civilian Conservation Corps, began to further alter the landscape. An intricate system of dikes, water control structures, ditches and roads were built. Although they never produced as many ducks as early managers hoped, these pools have become vital habitat for the common loon and trumpeter swan, both Michigan State threatened species.



Into the 1980s grains were planted to provide food for wildlife.

Looking to the Future

Through the years, land management philosophy has changed. At Seney, techniques meant to benefit a single species are being replaced with techniques meant to benefit an entire ecosystem as research continues to unearth important relationships between animals and the environment. Good science is vital to sound wildlife management. Science is used to monitor management actions and habitat response to treatments. As new discoveries are made, refuge management practices will continue to evolve to help maintain the biodiversity in the area for generations to come.



In 1936, 300 flightless Canada geese were brought to the refuge to establish a local population.



Common Loon,
© Amy Widenhofer

Seney is for Wildlife

Today, the refuge is managed in a gradient from conservation in the eastern portion, restoration in the center and preservation in the western portion, where the Seney Wilderness Area is found.

Conservation

The eastern portion of the refuge contains a system of man-made pools managed using a system of spillways, water control structures and dikes. These pools impound nearly 5,000 acres of open water. This portion of the refuge is the most familiar to refuge guests. Visitors delight at the sight of trumpeter swans nesting and raising their young. The open water provides an ideal place for osprey to fish. The lack of boat traffic and deliberate water management make the pool system one of the most productive breeding grounds for common loons in the Midwest.



White-tailed Deer,
© Laura Wong

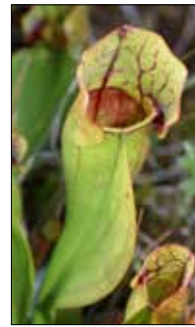
Restoration

Restoration efforts are concentrated in the central portion of the refuge. The scars of logging operations and failed attempts at farming over a century ago can still be seen on the landscape. In an attempt to restore historic land cover, a flurry of management activities is taking place. Removing dikes and plugging ditches, meant to drain wetlands for farming or to produce additional pools, restores overland water flow to drained wetlands.



Spruce Grouse,
© Sierra Utych

Old farm fields are left alone to return to deciduous forest. Forest management is used in conjunction with prescribed fires to produce historical conditions in mixed-pine forests. This management will hopefully equate to improved habitat for birds such as black-backed woodpecker, spruce grouse and whip-poor-will.



Purple Pitcher Plant,
D. Gardner, USFWS

General Management Activities

Watching Wildlife



Lighthouse Island Huron NWR



Leopard Frog, Harbor Island NWR

Preservation

The western portion of the refuge boasts the Seney Wilderness Area and the Strangmoor Bog National Natural Landmark. This unique ecosystem complex of patterned peatland punctuated with pine islands has been minimally altered and will be preserved in this condition. Carnivorous plants, such as the purple pitcher plant and sundew, and animals such as bobcat, fisher, and many other species can be found living on these lands.

Throughout the refuge, fire, river and wetland restoration, mowing, invasive species management and forest management are used, where appropriate, to maintain diverse wildlife habitats.

Seney National Wildlife Refuge continues to be a place of excitement and wonder where wildlife comes first. It is a place where management decisions are made in the best interest of wildlife and their habitats and people are encouraged to explore and learn about the natural world.

Satellite Lands

Seney National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) also manages lands far from the main office. Information about the following refuges can be obtained from the Seney Headquarters or on their respective web sites:

- Huron NWR – Lake Superior, established in 1905
fws.gov/refuge/huron;
- Michigan Islands NWR – Lake Michigan, established in 1947
fws.gov/refuge/michigan_islands;
- Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Management Area, established in 1980
fws.gov/refuge/kirtlands_warbler;
- Harbor Island NWR – Lake Huron, established in 1983
fws.gov/refuge/harbor_island.

Visitor Center

Seney is for People, Too!

The Visitor Center is open from 9 am to 5 pm daily, including federal holidays, from May 15 to October 20. Exhibits, "The Wonder of Nature" film, a bookstore, and a friendly staff will help you plan your visit.

Marshland Wildlife Drive

A seven-mile, one-way, auto tour route takes visitors through wetlands and forests. Three observation decks and numerous pools make this drive a great wildlife watching opportunity. The tour route does not accommodate large recreational vehicles.

Nature Trails



American Bittern
© Teresa McGill

Northern Hardwoods Hiking & Cross-country Ski Trails

The Pine Ridge Nature Trail starts at the Visitor Center. This 1.4-mile loop takes visitors through a variety of habitats where sightings of songbirds and beavers are common. Near the midpoint of the trail you may walk the 0.5-mile Wigwam Connector Trail which links to the Wigwams Access Point and the 0.5-mile South Show Pool Loop. The Civilian Conservation Corps built the Wigwams in the late 1930s as a fishing access point and rest area for visitors. A primitive restroom is available seasonally.

Ten miles of trails are open to hiking spring, summer and fall. Winter months find the trails groomed and ready to welcome cross-country skiers.

Winter Activities

Cross-country skiing and snowshoeing are allowed nearly anywhere on the refuge.

Backcountry



© Jim Hill

Many miles of unpaved roads are available for hiking and biking through the backcountry. For those who seek wildlife and solitude, these roads are for you. Certain roads may be closed for management or emergency purposes. Watch for signs concerning closed areas.

Mushroom & Berry Picking

Mushroom and berry picking for personal use is permitted.

Paddling



© Tom Kenney

Nature Programs & School

Enjoy a day of paddling along the Manistique River, which flows through the southern part of the refuge. Outfitters are located in Germfask. Use is limited to daylight hours with no overnight camping allowed. No boats are permitted on refuge pools or marshes.

Programs and special events are offered throughout the year. Check the refuge website for a calendar of events. Call to schedule a field trip.

Wilderness Area

The 25,150-acre Seney Wilderness Area is found in the western portion of the refuge. Open to day use only, this truly wild place is primarily wetland and challenging to access.

Fishing



J. Maslowski, USFWS

Anglers are welcome to fish along the 3.5 mile Fishing Loop, Show Pools, C-3 Pool and various rivers and streams. Please consult the fishing brochure for specific details. Fish species found on the refuge include northern pike, yellow perch, brown bullhead, bluegill, pumpkinseed, brown and brook trout, walleye and smallmouth bass. To protect the trumpeter swan and common loon, lead sinkers may not be used on the refuge. A state fishing license is required.

Hunting

Ruffed grouse, American woodcock, snipe, snowshoe hare, white-tailed deer and black bear may be hunted during some state seasons. Please see the hunting brochure for current regulations.

Whitefish Point Unit

Located 11 miles north of Paradise on the shore of Lake Superior, this unit is over 50 acres in size and a stop-over for birds migrating to and from Canada. Its primary natural features are gravel beaches, sandy beach dunes and stunted jack pine dominated forest.



Piping Plover
© Sierra Utych



Please Obey These Special Rules

- Daylight use only.
- Dogs allowed on a leash, exceptions apply to hunting (*see hunting regulations for more information*).
- No camping or overnight parking.
- Off-road vehicles are prohibited.
- Open fires are not allowed.
- Boats, canoes or other floatation devices are not permitted on refuge pools.
- Do not feed the wildlife.

Bufflehead

© Laura Wong

